

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

*Edited & Introduced by Wesley McNair,
Maine Poet Laureate*

In today's poem, Bruce Willard of Boothbay Harbor remembers his stepfather through metaphors derived from sailing, his favorite pastime.

Elegy for the Stepfather

by Bruce Willard

Only a month ago I imagined sailing with him
on the ketch he built. His oversized hands
on the tiller. Sails fathered by a sou'west breeze.

He, who came like a front into my home
and stole my wind a decade ago.
Who gave it back in the way he tendered my son.
Trimmed the parts that were neither his nor mine
alone to love.

This strange, familial wind we rode and shared,
separated us, paired us on tack,
only to separate us again.

Becalmed, I miss him now,
just the small boat of his ashes left.
These storms which have no names,
the ghostly calm
which leaves no wake.

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